innsbruck nature film festival 2026

25 years of nature film in Innsbruck

In 2025, the festival celebrated a major success with more than **6,000 visitors**. For its 25th anniversary edition, the festival organisers are once again aiming for **sold-out cinemas and an inspiring festival experience for audiences from Innsbruck and beyond**.

Under the motto **“we are one”**, the festival presents a carefully curated selection of films that move, inspire and encourage us. At the heart of the programme are the diversity of life, our relationship with nature, our responsibility, and the question of how we want to live on our planet.

The festival will officially open on **7 October at 7:00 pm** with **“Bee Wild”**, a fascinating journey into the world of bees and pollinators.

Awards & Prizes

This year, the festival will present **13 awards with a total prize value of more than €29,000**. The awards will be presented during the festive **Awards Ceremony on 10 October**.

Filmmakers and Science Up Close

Many filmmakers will travel to Innsbruck in person to present their work, share insights into their creative process and engage directly with the audience.

The **inff Film Industry Market** brings together professionals from across the film industry – from filmmakers and producers to distributors and other industry representatives – through workshops, masterclasses and pitching sessions.

The popular **Science Glimpses**, organised in cooperation with the **University of Innsbruck**, provide scientific perspectives on selected films, placing their stories and themes in a broader context and encouraging audiences to explore the issues further.

Art, Experiences and the Festival for Everyone

From the very beginning, the inff has been committed to communicating ideas about nature through art and has never limited itself to film alone.

Exhibitions in galleries across Innsbruck, together with the immersive **360° installation “Darkness Matters”** at St. James’ Cathedral, connect artistic perspectives with questions surrounding nature and the environment.

Another festival highlight is an on-stage conversation with **André Heller** about his personal relationship with nature. The event will take place on **Sunday, 11 October at 4:30 pm at Metropol Kino**.

With workshops, excursions and nature experiences in and around Innsbruck, the city itself becomes part of the festival stage.

A comprehensive **children's and family programme** takes place every afternoon from Thursday to Saturday, with some events also offered in English.

25 Years of Nature Film – Looking Back and Ahead

To mark its 25th anniversary, the inff is looking back at its history with a special retrospective.

Six selected films trace the journey from the early **Innsbruck Nature Film Days** to today's international festival. The retrospective includes **"Nanook of the North"**, which was screened at the second Innsbruck Nature Film Days in 2003, as well as **"Virunga"**, **"Patrick and the Whale"**, **"What Fish Want"**, **"Mautplatz"** and **"Unterwegs nach … Heimat"**.

Over the past 25 years, the festival has screened **more than 1,000 films**, bringing extraordinary stories about nature, people and the environment to the big screen.

FILM HIGHLIGHTS

7–11 October 2026 | Innsbruck

For its anniversary edition, the festival brings together award-winning audience favourites from its own history with some of the most exciting international productions of the current festival year.

The anniversary retrospective opens with **"Patrick and the Whale"**, the award-winning documentary about the extraordinary relationship between an underwater filmmaker and a female sperm whale. With its striking cinematography and emotional storytelling, the film has captivated audiences and critics around the world and was nominated for a Documentary Emmy.

From the depths of the ocean, the journey continues to the wetlands of Cuba. **"To the West, in Zapata"** follows the people of the remote Zapata Peninsula, whose lives have been closely connected to one of the Caribbean's most important wetlands for generations.

Through quiet and atmospheric imagery, the film portrays a landscape in which nature is not merely a backdrop, but shapes the rhythm of everyday life. The result is a poetic yet powerful portrait of a region that has retained much of its original character.

With **“In the Company of Wolves: An American Journey”**, the festival turns its gaze towards North America. Narrated by Oscar-winning actor **Jeff Bridges**, the documentary uses the story of the wolf as a starting point for an unconventional exploration of the United States.

Questions of colonisation, Indigenous history, conservation and national identity come together in a multifaceted portrait of America. The film offers a thoughtful and moving perspective on the social and cultural complexities of the United States.

The journey then continues to the far north. Swiss nature filmmaker **Chris Schmid** follows musk oxen through the harsh wilderness of the Arctic in **“Muskox”**.

With spectacular wildlife cinematography, the film portrays a species that has survived in one of the most extreme environments on Earth since the Ice Age. At the same time, it shows how even these remote habitats are increasingly being transformed by climate change.

With **“Daughters of the Forest”**, the focus shifts to Mexico. This visually striking documentary follows two Indigenous mycologists who combine traditional knowledge with modern science.

Between fungi, forest ecology and spiritual traditions, the film offers fascinating new perspectives on the relationship between humans and the natural world.

The festival’s engagement with nature extends far beyond documentary filmmaking, as demonstrated by its **Green Fiction** section.

With **“Rebuilding”**, the festival presents an internationally acclaimed feature film that explores the aftermath of a devastating natural disaster from a deeply human perspective.

Starring **Josh O’Connor**, the film shows how ecological crises can transform not only landscapes and habitats, but also relationships, communities and personal identities. “Rebuilding” represents a new generation of fictional storytelling in which the climate crisis is not merely a backdrop, but the starting point for deeply human stories.

“How Deep Is Your Love” offers a fascinating glimpse into one of the last great unknowns on our planet.

Directed by **Eleanor Mortimer**, the film follows marine biologists exploring the mysterious ecosystems of the deep sea – a world that still holds countless secrets and is increasingly threatened by human activity.

At the centre of the film are the scientists themselves, whose curiosity, perseverance and scientific expertise are helping to expand our understanding of life beneath the ocean surface.

Combining spectacular images of little-known species with questions about the future of our oceans, the film highlights the importance of independent research and the crucial role of diverse perspectives in protecting our planet.

The film highlights conclude with **“The Tale of Silyan”**, the new film by *Honeyland* director **Tamara Kotevska**.

This poetic story about a Macedonian farmer and an injured white stork combines nature observation with folklore and social change, creating a remarkable cinematic experience.

Recently nominated for two Emmy Awards, “The Tale of Silyan” is among the internationally acclaimed nature documentaries of the year. With this film, the innsbruck nature film festival once again underlines its commitment to presenting audiences with some of the most important and compelling contemporary works of international nature filmmaking.

PRESS CONFERENCE

A press conference marking the festival’s 25th anniversary and presenting the 2026 programme will take place on **1 October at 10:00 am** at **360° Bar, RathausGalerien Innsbruck**.

The speakers will be:

Elisabeth Stark, Executive Director, innsbruck nature film festival
Johannes Kostenzer, Festival Director, innsbruck nature film festival
Peter Paul Mölk, Chairman, Innsbruck Tourism

Registration is requested at **viktoria.gleirscher@pro.media**.

Full festival information:
www.inff.eu